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Cheap shots at the CIA

Editor, News-Press: This letter is in response to Jack Anderson's column carried by the News-Press on 11 June. Anderson comments on an interview his associate had with Ralph McGehee, a retired employee of the CIA, who has written a book charging that the CIA's top officials have repeatedly lied about its secret operations to the public, the Congress and even the president. I have known Mr. McGehee since we served together in the Far East in 1955, and I cannot let his specious charges against the CIA go unchallenged. People who read Anderson's column have the right to know more about McGehee.

I served with the CIA in the capacity of an intelligence officer early in my career and over the last ten years of my tenure in the Agency I held a number of senior management positions in the Directorate of Operations. I retired from the CIA in 1979, after serving more than 27 years. Therefore, I believe I am qualified to refute McGehee's cheap shots at the CIA.

It is truly ironic that Jack Anderson sought out McGehee for a story on the CIA. By virtue of the rigid compartmentation within all the operational components of the CIA, McGehee knows deep down in his troubled soul that his knowledge of CIA operations beyond his isolated unit is superficial at best, and to say the least, subjective. The fact that McGehee evidently represented himself as a hard charging and all-knowing intelligence official is both ludicrous and deceitful.

McGehee charges that the "CIA uses secrecy to cover up incompetence, bureaucratic bungling and illegal activities." By this statement and others in the interview, McGehee has impugned the integrity and honesty of the hundreds of dedicated men and women who have served in the ranks of the CIA, and who risk their lives in order to provide our government with timely, objective, and concise intelligence. Thirty-five CIA operations officers have lost their lives over the past 25 years in the service of their country.

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